

## CHAPTER 1

# The Truth

*Money is not required to buy one necessity of the soul.*

—Henry David Thoreau

**T** rue or false:

Money is the root of all evil.

Money is the great destroyer.

Money can't buy happiness.

Money can't buy peace of mind.

Money corrupts absolutely.

Money hardens the heart.

Money is our madness.

Money is our prison.

Money controls us.

Money changes us.

Money makes us greedy.

Money makes us poor.

We are at war with money. We don't know when it started, or even why. But it feels right. It is the right war to wage, because we are more important than money. Our souls are in danger. Money should have no power over us. But it does. So we sing the battle cry.

We curse it. We curse it with pleasure, with anger, with spite, with venom.

Our souls rail against it as if it is all that's rotten with humanity.

We hate the wicked control it commands over us.

We resent its spiteful disregard for the stress it breeds.

We scorn the greed it births.

We brood over the sly way it eats away at our health, our longevity, and our happiness.

We spite it for making us helpless victims to its power.

We whine like spoiled children for its gift of misery.

We would burn it gleefully, bill by bill, if we didn't love it so much.

Yes, we are in love with money.

Whatever this fabricated war might be, it can't touch this insatiable desire to have it, hold it, covet it and cherish it.

We dream of bulging pockets and oversized paychecks.

We lust for this magical money freedom.

We revere it with blatant disregard for the consequences.

We're convinced we need it to buy our happiness.

We're jealous of those that have it.

We moan when we lose it.

We rejoice when we gain it.

We beg for it, plead for it, fight for it, cry for it.

We would violently curse a man who gleefully burned it, bill by bill.

What madness! What a twisted way to move through life!

If we had the same kind of relationship with our lovers, it would be dysfunctional and emotionally abusive. *I love you, I need you, I want more of you. You disgust me, you poison me. You're mine, all mine. You love everybody else, but not me.*

We are in a relationship with money whether we like it. It's not going away. It will not die. We live with money and money lives with us. Yet we fight, and fight, and fight. Struggle, struggle, and struggle.

This vicious cycle seems to be our fate.

And yet, as we fight, struggle, love, and hate, there is a small group of people who have it, hold it, and don't need it. People soaked in prosperity, having everything they could want. Everything, including mission and purpose. People who taste profound success while money is the least of their passions.

They neither love it, nor hate it.

They neither struggle with it, nor fight it.

They command it, yet respect it.

They don't fight for it, but they give with it.

And somehow they keep making money.

But this enlightened approach is far from the norm. And we have no help from the world around us to gain this enlightenment, much less even recognize the potential for enlightenment. Let us see how the mental poison keeps away the enlightenment.

A man drives down Route 180 in St. Louis, Missouri on his way to work, when his 1993 Toyota Corolla suddenly begins belching smoke and vapor from under the hood. He doesn't have the money to pay for repairs, but if he can't make it to work, he won't get paid his hourly wage. Not having a credit card, or any other recourse, he quickly trots to the closest storefront that promises payday loans. In hours, he has a \$500 loan, and gets his Corolla to a repair shop. Two weeks later, he gets his paycheck, but he can't quite pull the cash together to pay back the short-term loan. The debt turns into \$644 in one day, and grows staggeringly over the course of the next few months. The payday loan company finally sues him, and he loses everything he has, including his job.

He concludes, *Money is evil.*

Two sisters convene at a lawyer's office to hear their mother's last will and testament for the first time. They learn that the elder sister has been left the majority of their mother's estate, and the younger sister has been left a smaller amount locked in a trust. Later, in the older sister's living room, the younger one angrily asks why she has been so poorly rewarded in the will. The older sister cautiously comments on the younger's problems with drugs and alcohol, as well as her absence at the hospital for the last few months. The younger sister flies into a rage, and so begins a fight so awful they cannot speak to one another. Even after they reconnect years later, the younger sister feels resentment. The older one forever feels guilt over keeping her full share, yet never offers her sister any financial assistance for fear of insulting her.

They conclude, *Money is the great destroyer.*

Every day for 23 years, a man starts his day at his local deli to get a coffee, a breakfast sandwich, and a lotto ticket. He doesn't have much, so he rarely splurges for a big ticket, but after spending thousands of dollars over the years on lotto tickets, he hits the jackpot. When given the choice of receiving the prize over 26 annual installments or in a lump sum, he

goes for the lump sum. He wants to see \$3 million in his bank account. Having been a kid who didn't know if there would be hot water when he turned on the shower, who was made fun of for wearing hand-me-down clothes two sizes too big, he decides to show everybody what he never had. He buys a house, a beautiful car, and a boat, and he meets his wife. He buys his parents a new house too. He lives from one extravagant vacation to the next. He donates money to neighborhood communities. In five years, his bank account is at zero. He sells the house, the car, the boat. His wife leaves, and eventually he goes back to work, and to a different deli.

The man concludes, *Money can't buy happiness.*

A single mother works two jobs to raise her kids. She can't remember the last time she wasn't working, cooking, or cleaning. Each month the bills pile higher, and each of those white envelopes with the glassine window she pulls out of her mailbox is another moment out of thousands when her heart sinks. There's no payoff. And as retirement looks more and more like a fairy tale her parents told her about, she cannot see an end to it all.

The mother concludes, *Money is our prison.*

A young man takes a job working for a company he doesn't like, selling a product he doesn't believe in, talking without joy or enthusiasm to potential customers. He suffers at work, fails to make income, and struggles to pay his bills. Over time, he loses his self respect, his family, and his health.

He concludes, *Money makes us greedy.*

A woman goes into business for herself. Not knowing her own hidden beliefs about money and success, she pours all her savings and all her loans into her business. As it fails, she borrows more, taps out her credit cards, and fights to survive. Without an awakening, she goes bankrupt.

She concludes, *Money makes us poor.*

But are these well-meaning souls concluding facts, or beliefs?

Far too many of us are believing what we think are truths, when in fact they are shared beliefs that don't hold up under deep thought.

Beliefs create our reality. They influence what we see. They filter out facts. And many of us end up thinking we need to struggle, starve, and wish for a better life.

Yet in these many moments so many of us share, we look upon the other side with envy. People who've found a way to unshackle

themselves from the bonds of money. We think people who shun money are better than we could ever be. We feel shame that we cannot be so bold. There are those courageous souls who, in a moment of divine instruction, quit their jobs, sell their homes and all their belongings, and take off for a journey without knowing when or how they will return. Without the threat of money snapping at their heels.

We admire their courage.

We see the spiritually devout who embrace a life of poverty and give their souls to their God and the greater good. They spend their lives without a hint of luxury except for the greatest luxury of freedom and soulful purity. They are walking gifts of selflessness. They toil in war-torn countries, helping those in the most desperate and despicable conditions, unmoved by the threat of the warlord waiting around the corner for a new body to snatch.

We admire their purity.

We see the poets, the artists of legend, who romantically refuse money to instead wed their divine muse. They suffer poverty, the scant food or clothing, and the threat of eviction for the absolute thrill of following their passion. Their passion . . . what a delicious idea to devote oneself to such a worthy cause. Passion unbridled by what the rest of us suffer every day . . . want and need. These lofty spirits have no want or need. It's as though they drink the air, soaking in the sun, and find all the life-sustaining nourishment they need, like wild vines faithfully stretching up in reverence to the sky.

We admire their tenacity.

And here we sit, mountains of bills to our left as we stare off longingly to the right at these brave souls stretching free in a world without financial worry. They may suffer. They may struggle. They may spend days with hunger . . . but they're free. They are bastions of passionate living. They are the embodiment of what it truly means to be alive. They are living life to its limits. They are possessed with an unbridled mission. They are the true servants of the divine.

But what is the most insidious belief of all?

What is the hidden belief that keeps most of us in the dark about money?

These stories of the greed-tainted soul and the passion-inspired spirit are as old as money itself. In fact, perhaps the most famous saying that spread far and wide through our society is an ancient quote from

the Bible. You can complete it on your own: “Money is the root of all \_\_\_\_.”

You know the word. It’s in your unconscious and now in your conscious. Whether we’re Christian or not doesn’t matter. That quote has permeated the secular world with force and longevity. The devil incarnate, folded patiently in your wallet, is waiting to taste the light and torture your soul once again.

But the Bible is misquoted.

These seven ageless words—money is the root of all evil—are fraudulent.

The actual quote from the Bible paints a very different picture: “. . . those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”—1 Timothy 6:9–10

And here we taste our first tease of awakening. Not the Biblical kind, but the universal kind.

The love of money . . .

The love of money is the root of all evil . . .

And truly Awakened Millionaires aren’t in love with money.

They use it. They appreciate it. They leverage it. But they aren’t in love with it.

While this doesn’t dismiss the acts of greed and corruption that some men and women have perpetrated on money’s behalf, it does beg a question loaded with a new vision.

Is money the root of this greed and corruption?

Is money the cause of all our pain and suffering?

Is money the demon behind our cursed wants and needs?

Is money the sole force responsible for such collective misery and struggle?

Or could it be something else entirely?

What if we considered it to be what it is: an inanimate object? A piece of paper? A disc of base metal?

What if we could strip away all our notions about money? What if we could put down our negative thoughts about it, as well as our voracious desires for it?

Could we completely transform our relationship with money? Could we imagine a new future devoid of such a bizarre, schizophrenic battle raging in our heads?

Now what if we considered that this absolutely counterintuitive perspective on money led to greater happiness, truer success, and opened up our lives to abundance?

Could that be possible?

I'm here to tell you that it is. It is possible. It isn't fantasy or utopian delusion. And it isn't about awkwardly sticking our heads in the sand.

In fact, a healthy model for how we can relate to and interact with money is alive and well, instilled in a small group of people. It is a reality championed by this quiet breed of visionaries and passionate purveyors of good.

It is here. Now.

Meet the Awakened Millionaire.